



FEMA

Briefly Speaking

Region V Newsletter

Employee briefing given on MAX_{HR} and the new human capital programs

An employee briefing was held, via teleconference, on Mar 11 for all FEMA Reg. V staff to give an overview of the new Department of Homeland Security MAX_{HR} human resources system. Kathy Delauter, a FEMA Program Management Specialist at Emmitsburg, led the discussion and answered questions posed by attendees.

The new system will apply to all permanent, fulltime employees and temporary fulltime employees. A similar system may be developed for Stafford Act Employees and COREs who will not be covered under MAX_{HR} as it is currently structured.

MAX_{HR}

The new system was designed to be collaborative and foster better communication and participation from employees at all levels. Key components of MAX_{HR} are: Performance Management; Classification of Job Functions; Pay Ranges; Labor Relations; Adverse Actions and Appeals.

Performance Management is considered the “centerpiece” of MAX_{HR}, shifting the focus from *appraisal* to *leadership*. It is hoped that through open communication and TWO-way feedback, clear expectations can be set and shared goals achieved. Manager training began earlier this month. Supervisor and employee training is expected to start in July 2005, and the new system is scheduled to be implemented on Oct. 1, 2005.

Under the new system, jobs will be classified and grouped into “occupational clusters” based on several criteria, including similarity of work, qualifications and the recruiting market. Pay ranges will be set according to the clusters, with levels determined by market conditions.

Conversion to the new pay system will be implemented in phases, beginning in January 2006. Employees will be “bought out” of their current grade with no reduction in pay. Individual pay increases will no longer be based on longevity, but rather on performance.

Collective bargaining will be preserved and an independent Homeland Security Labor Relations Board will be established to resolve issues. Both the Adverse Action and Appeals processes will be simplified and streamlined, allowing for quicker resolution of issues. These portions of the program will become effective in June 2005.

For the latest information on the new HR system, look for the **MAX_{HR} News Corner** in weekly issues of the *DHS Today* newsletter. Employees needing more specific information can email “Ask MAX” at MAXHR@dhs.gov (also see *Web Links* - p.4)

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Message from the Regional Director...

Greetings from HQ. As many of you know I've been detailed here as Acting Director of FEMA's Response Division. The position provides many challenges, but also a great opportunity to work with some key agency functions, including Urban Search & Rescue, the National Disaster Medical System, MERS and our Logistics group. I appreciate the support you've shown to me during this time, as well as to Jan, who has stepped in as Acting Regional Director. As always, Jan and I are available to address any issues or concerns impacting the region.

Ed Buikema
Regional Director

Happy Spring! We have had a very busy several months, and I want to acknowledge everyone's hard work. Whether you supported the many PDAs and disaster declarations here in the region as well as in the Southwest, or accomplished other important work, your extra effort and contributions make Region V look good. You should be proud of what has been achieved. Now, we are both preparing for another disaster season and anticipating new initiatives under the new DHS leadership. Your continued support of our mission is appreciated. I also thank you for your support while I fill in as RD during Ed's absence. I encourage you to share with me your ideas and concerns.

Jan Odesho
Acting Regional Director

Calendar of Events and Meetings

March 21 thru 25:

Logistics Training -
Training Room

April 5 and 6:

EEO Training for Supervisors, Managers and
DAE Cadre Managers - Training Room

April 18:

Mitigation Division Quarterly Staff Meeting -
Training Room

April 18 thru 22:

Grants Management Training -
Training Room

Employees submitted for "Chicago Federal Employee of the Year" award

Several members of the FEMA Region V staff have been nominated for the 2005 "Chicago Federal Employee of the Year" award. The Chicago Federal Executive Board established the award 48 years ago to "recognize and honor the brightest stars of our Federal workforce."

Nominated for the Outstanding Professional Employee category, Ken Hinterlong was cited for his management of the flood hazard mapping program in the region.

Two groups were nominated for the "Outstanding Team" category: Larry Bailey, Bertha Curtis, Bill Powers, Linda Richardson, Jeanne Kern, Stacie Grathen, Victor Kurz, Jean McGhee, Susan Jensen, Livia Dean and Priscilla Giuseffi for their efforts in support of 9 regional disasters, as well as their work on the 2004 hurricanes.

Also, James Opoka, Deborah Razor, Warren Daniels, Rita Burke, Rosie Nettles-Bey, Gloria Milton, Priscilla Giuseffi and Shirley Britton were nominated for the support they provided in recruiting and deploying Citizen Corps personnel in response to the 2004 hurricanes.

Congratulations to all nominees.



D. Razor, W. Daniels, R. Burke, R. Nettles-Bey, G. Milton, P. Giuseffi, S. Britton and J. Opoka (not pictured) were on one of the teams nominated for the Chicago Federal Executive Board's Employee of the Year award.

Region hosts Response and Recovery Summit

State Directors, their staffs and selected County Emergency Managers attended a Response and Recovery Summit held February 1-3 at the Regional office in Chicago. The purpose of the summit was to provide an interactive forum to discuss response and recovery issues, and provide in-depth information about FEMA policies and programs. The summit featured briefings from Region V staff and FEMA Headquarters staff.



FCOs Marianne Jackson and Lee Champagne chat during a break at the summit.

States were briefed on Incident Reporting, Preliminary Damage Assessments, the declaration process, the recovery process, programs and policies. Presentations were provided by VOAD, Mitigation, Environmental, Public Affairs and Community Relations. Representatives from the Small Business Association (SBA) and the Inspector General were also on hand to discuss SBA declarations and the disaster closeout process respectively.

FEMA Recovery Director Dan Craig briefed the states on issues, best practices and lessons learned from the Florida hurricanes and other disasters. The final day of the summit featured a Federal Coordinating Officer panel that included FCO's Ron Sherman, Lee Champagne, Marianne Jackson, and Brad Gair. The panel discussed issues such as long term recovery, travel trailers, urban community relations and lessons learned.

State Briefs....

Illinois: The DFO servicing the EM3199, was recently closed. FEMA provided PA assistance totaling \$867,986 for costs associated with the snow disaster that affected 16 counties. (see *Wisconsin* for additional state activities)

Indiana: IA operations on DR1573 are phasing down as in accordance with the 3/22 registration deadline. Over 13,000 applications processed from 85 counties declared for IA. PA work continues for 41 counties. Completing operation for EM3197 in 50 counties.

Michigan: In March, a total of 16 Michigan communities received grants totaling \$1,576,127 to assist local fire departments. These funds are distributed in accordance with the Fire Act through two programs – Assistance to Firefighters Grants (AFG) and Fire Prevention and Safety Grants (FPS). These programs are designed to help local departments purchase equipment, fund firefighter health and safety initiatives, enhance emergency medical services and conduct fire education programs.

Minnesota: Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty signed the Map Mod Cooperating Technical Partnership (CTP) Memo of Agreement on 2/2/05. This CTP will strengthen the partnership between FEMA and the State of Minnesota for re-mapping the State's flood hazard areas.

Ohio: Ongoing support of DR1580 where 27 counties were declared for IA and 57 for PA. More than 3800 applications received and \$3.3M in grants approved. State has requested an additional 9 counties for IA. Application deadline is 4/18. (see *Wisconsin* for additional state activities)

Wisconsin: FEMA has approved Wisconsin's Hazard Mitigation Plan. This ensures the state remains eligible for non-emergency Stafford Act funding, including the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program, the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Fire Management Assistance Grants and Public Assistance Categories C-G. **Illinois'** and **Ohio's** plans have also been approved.

FOCUS ON FIVE...

Cathy McNamara, Contracting Officer, retired from FEMA on Mar. 17. She joined the agency as a DAE in 1985 and became a PFT in 1990.

When asked about her time here, Cathy said, "I loved my job and the agency. I would have done it for nothing – if I could have afforded it." Mike Moline, ARP Director, added, "We'll sure miss her wealth of program knowledge and great personality."

Cathy will be retiring to Indiana, but will keep up her ties to the agency as a DAE. She plans to spend a lot of playtime with her grandkids and finally go on her dream vacations.

"I'm definitely going back to Uruguay, but after that, I'm taking a ride on the Orient Express."



David Schein, Senior Natural Hazard Specialist, was recently awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Illinois Association for Floodplain and Stormwater Management. The honor is especially significant as it is only awarded to exceptional candidates.

In the presentation, David was referred to as "the region's expert on virtually all aspects of the NFIP." He was cited for "his devotion to floodplain management combined with his commonsense approach to dealing with local officials...In addition to his exceptional program expertise and knowledge, his personal high standards regarding time and attendance, work and travel and dedication to duty exemplify an outstanding civil servant."

The honor is not only well-deserved, but does credit to the Reg. V Mitigation team and the agency as a whole. Congratulations, David – and thanks.

Linda Sacia, External Affairs Officer, will also be retiring from the agency on Mar. 31. Linda joined FEMA in 1992 as the region's Public Information and Congressional officer. At the time, she was one of only two regional public affairs officers in the country.

"I've always tried to do new and different things to make Reg. V the best in the country," said Linda. "She's always had the Region's best interest at heart and made us shine," said Jan Odeshoo, Acting Regional Director.

Linda will continue on with the agency as a DAE, but has plenty of non-FEMA plans on her plate. *Non-disaster* reading, jewelry-making, crafting wearable art and traveling with her husband Herman are at the top of her list.



Regional Reminders...

All FEMA personnel are required to complete training on the Incident Command System (ICS) and the National Response Plan (NRP) by **April 30, 2005**. These courses can be taken as independent study (IS-100, 200, 700 & 800) through the agency's online Knowledge Center: <http://kc.fema.net>

Building Renovation Update...

Work on the 4th window replacement sequence should be complete within 2 weeks. Weather dictates work on the last sequence on the Congress side. Erection of the curtain wall should start in mid-April and be complete by the end of the month. This will allow restoration of the finishes on all the floors. There will be a lot of thumping and banging in the west stairwell and in the atrium for the next few months. If you have questions or concerns about the renovation's progress, feel free to call the construction superintendent:

Chip Fisher - (630) 742-9418.

Web Links...

* For information on **MAXHR** programs, go to the link listed below. Look under **DHS Today MAXHR Articles** to access the archive. www.dhsonline.dhs.gov/maxhr

* For the latest update on open disasters in the region, go to the FEMA homepage and click on the "Active Disasters & Emergencies" image www.fema.gov

* To get contact information for state offices and agencies of emergency management, go to: <http://www.fema.gov/fema/statedr.shtm>

* For more information on the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and NIMS-ICS training, go to www.nimsonline.com

Briefly Speaking is published by DHS/FEMA Region V External Affairs, 536 S. Clark St, Chicago, IL 60605. Comments or suggestions may be sent to douglas.welty@dhs.gov